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WASHINGTON - STANFIELD TURNER, FORMER CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE DIRECTOR, DISCLOSED WEDNESDAY THAT DURING THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION THE AGENCY SOUGHT WAYS TO OVERTHROW NOT ONLY IRAN'S AYATOLLAH KHOMEINI, BUT LIBYA'S MUHAMMAD KHADAFY, CUBA'S FIDEL CASTRO AND NICARAGUA'S SANDINISTA REGIME.

AS CIA DIRECTOR, ADMIRAL TURNER NEVER SENT SUCH A PLAN TO CONGRESS - BUT THAT WAS BECAUSE HE FOUND "NO WAY" TO PRACTICALLY OVERTHROW THOSE LEADERS.

"THERE IS NOTHING MORALLY WRONG WITH TRYING TO OVERTHROW A FOREIGN GOVERNMENT BY COVERT MEANS," HE SAID. BUT HE OBJECTED TO CURRENT CIA INVOLVEMENT IN NICARAGUA BECAUSE "WE'VE GIVEN THE IMPRESSION WE'RE TRYING TO PUT A DICTATOR BACK IN."

"IF WE HAD A KNIGHT IN SHINING ARMOR" THAT WOULD BE DIFFERENT, HE WENT ON. BUT IN SUPPORTING VETERANS OF THE DEFEATED SOMOZA GOVERNMENT, "WE DON'T APPEAR TO BE BACKING AN ACCEPTABLE ALTERNATIVE" TO THE SANDINISTAS.

TURNER EXPRESSED DISAPPROVAL OF A NEW SECRET U.S. ARMY INTELLIGENCE ORGANIZATION REPORTED IN WEDNESDAY'S PAPERS. "ONE OF THE MAJOR INTELLIGENCE ISSUES THE COUNTRY FACES IS GETTING THE PENTAGON TO UNDERSTAND IT CAN'T HAVE ALL INTELLIGENCE RESOURCES UNDER ITS CONTROL," HE ADDED.

HE ALSO SAID THAT THE ARMY'S INTELLIGENCE SUPPORT ACTIVITY (ISA) "DID NOT EXIST AS FAR AS I KNOW DURING MY TENURE." THIS APPEARED TO CONTRADICT SOURCES WHO SAID THE UNIT WAS ESTABLISHED DURING THE IRANIAN HOSTAGE CRISIS IN 1980, THE LAST YEAR OF THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION.

BACKED BY A 31-YEAR NAVY CAREER BEFORE HIS FOUR YEARS AT CIA, TURNER TOLD REPORTERS AT BREAKFAST THAT "THE MILITARY DOESN'T FIT WELL INTO THE COVERT ACTIVITY ROLE .... IT IS NOT THE ORGANIZATION TO DO HUMAN INTELLIGENCE."

THE ARMY'S ISA IS SAID TO BE ACTIVE IN EL SALVADOR AND IN SUPPORT OF GUERRILLAS OPPOSING THE NICARAGUAN GOVERNMENT. IN THE BEGINNING IT REPORTEDLY OPERATED WITHOUT CONGRESSIONAL AUTHORIZATION AND WITHOUT FORMAL AWARENESS BY EITHER THE CIA OR THE DEFENSE INTELLIGENCE AGENCY.

IT IS ALREADY KNOWN FROM EARLIER REPORTS THAT THIS COUNTRY TRIED TO FIND MEANS TO REPLACE AYATOLLAH KHOMEINI AS ONE WAY OF FREEING THE CAPTIVES IN IRAN.

THUS HIS DISCLOSURE THAT UNDER HIM THE CIA EXPLORED WAYS TO OUST KHOMEINI WAS NOT SURPRISING. BUT THE AGENCY HAS NOT PUBLICIZED ANY EFFORTS DURING THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION TO DRAW CONTINGENCY PLANS TO GET RID OF KHADAFY, CASTRO AND THE SANDINISTAS.